



As Australia's largest city, it is hardly surprising that for many international students Sydney represents the entertainment capital of Australia. "My own perception of this area of Australia is [that] Sydney has everything you want - shops, restaurants, a thriving nightlife and a fantastic natural setting," says Pannipa Wongdararassamee, Manager of the International Study and Travel Center in Thailand. "I always tell my students that there are many interesting sights to see around Sydney. They will get great experiences from this city."

Louise McDermott, Media Officer at Tafe NSW - Sydney Institute, agrees that international students studying in the centre of Sydney have a wide range of activities to choose from in their spare time. "Our institute has five colleges that international students attend, and all of these are well serviced by public transport and close to the heart of what Sydney has to offer - beaches, parks, cinema, theatre, fairs and tourist attractions such as the Opera House, the harbour bridge and the historic Rocks area," she says.

Popular student haunts in Sydney include the Rocks - the site of the first white settlement in Australia and now a fashionable tourist precinct with many shops, restaurants and bars - Darling Harbour and Sydney's harbour beaches, all of which provide lively entertainment during the evenings. "Darling Harbour hosts a variety of restaurants, bars and nightclubs," says Jodie Caruana, Student Adviser at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). "Two of the most popular being Home nightclub and the ultra trendy Cargo Bar. Oxford Street is another street of endless bars, clubs and restaurants."

Eating out in Sydney is also an exciting experience, as there is a wide variety of different ethnic cuisine on offer. Heather Ulanas, Marketing Officer at Sydney West International College, says students can choose between Chinese, Indian, Italian, Malaysian, Thai, Mexican, Lebanese or Australian cuisine.

Australia is proud of its multicultural communities, and the Australian people have a reputation for a love of life and sense of community that is expressed through the large number of outdoor festivals

Selection of higher education institutions in Sydney

	Use agents	Total no. students	% os students
Australian International College of Business	✓	230	100
Australian Pacific College	✓	350	100
Kent Institute of Business and Technology	✓	650	95
Macquarie University	✓	24,000	15
Sydney West International College	✓	400	90
Tafe NSW - Sydney Institute	✓	60,000	2
University of New South Wales	✓	37,000	23
University of Sydney	✓	40,000	12
Uniwold Business and English Colleges	✓	850	100

Sydney

Sydney's favourable exchange rate, multicultural society, warm climate and numerous annual events and festivals ensure that studying in Sydney is a particularly lively experience for international students.

and events that occur year round throughout Australia. Sydney's local inhabitants - known as Sydneysiders - are no exception. The city is host to a large number of festivals and cultural events, which international students can take part in along with locals. "A famous festival in Sydney which many students look forward to attending is Sydney's Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras which takes place in the first weekend in March and is huge," says Amanda Rudge, Director of Marketing at Australian Pacific College. "Last year, there were approximately 600,000 spectators lined along Oxford Street to watch the parade."

There are also a number of events which reflect the multicultural origins of Sydney's local population. "Local communities host regular cultural festivals around the city," says McDermott, "such as Chinese New Year in the Haymarket, or the Leichhardt Festa celebrating all that is Italian in this inner city suburb."

Caruana adds, "In October, Sydney hosts the Food & Wine Festival and one of Sydney's gardens transforms into the night noodle markets reminiscent of those found in Singapore and beyond."

As the pace of Sydney's city life can be bewildering for a newly

Student facts

Average costs

One month's rent for shared flat: AU\$150 (US\$76)
 One week's basic groceries: AU\$60 (US\$31)
 An alcoholic drink: AU\$4 (US\$2)
 A cinema ticket: AU\$12 (US\$6)
 A basic meal in a restaurant: AU\$10 (US\$5)

Celebrations and festivals

January: Sydney Festival
 February/March: Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras
 February to March: Hunter Valley Vintage Festival
 March/April: Royal Easter Show
 October: Food and Wine Festival
 December: Start of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race

arrived international student, many institutions in Sydney provide comprehensive activity and orientation programmes in order to help students adjust quickly to their new surroundings. International students enrolled on the UNSW foundation year programme are given a city tour of Sydney before the beginning of their course.

"[There is also an orientation programme two or three days before classes start," says Caruana. "We incorporate general information about living in Australia with information about studying on the UNSW foundation year and team building games, so students can interact with each other before classes even start."

Organised events and expeditions for students continue throughout the year in many colleges in Sydney. "Australian Pacific College has a full-time activities coordinator who organises different activities for students each week," says Rudge. "These include skydiving, horseriding, sailing, soccer, surfing and also visiting museums, art galleries, the opera and the cinema. We also organise weekends to the Hunter Valley vineyards for wine tasting."

Due to the favourable exchange rate, studying in Australia can work out to be a cheaper option for

international students wanting to study in an English-speaking country, and as Patcharaporn Boonkerd of Siam Overseas Pro Co. in Thailand points out, part-time work can "pay more than the monthly salary that [Thai students] could earn from full-time jobs in Thailand".

Compared to the rest of the country, however, living in Sydney can be quite expensive. Harutai Kamolsirisakul, from IDP Bangkok in Thailand, says, "[There is a] difficulty in finding low cost accommodation [in Sydney]. This is especially so for those enrolled in universities close to the city centre and eastern suburbs."

Caruana agrees. "Sad to say but Sydney is the most expensive city in Australia when it comes to accommodation. [However], at the moment there is an abundance of rental properties on offer, so it is not that difficult to find living arrangements which are suitable."

Most institutions in Sydney provide overseas students with help

to find suitable accommodation and students studying outside the main city centre generally find that the cost of renting is more reasonable. "A service is provided to help students find accommodation," says Ulanas at Sydney West International College, which is located in Parramatta, outside Sydney's city centre. "Independent accommodation is available, as well as homestay, [and] costs are mid-range."

At Tafe NSW - Sydney Institute, McDermott believes that Sydney's numerous attractions more than make up for any extra expenses that students might have to pay to live there. "Some students indicate that Sydney is slightly more expensive to live in than Brisbane or Melbourne - but then again they have the world's best beaches at their fingertips, the most beautiful harbour in the world on their doorstep and the magical Sydney harbour bridge and Sydney Opera House within easy travelling distance," she says.

Student views

"[I came to Sydney] because I wanted to learn English and also because it is very good for my profession as a dentist. I have done many things [in Sydney]. This city is so good, the people are very kind and I like everything here. The experience [of studying in Sydney] is very good for learning about yourself and about the culture of others. [I have done] many different things, but after college I usually go to the beach, surf [or go to] museums. The nightlife [in Sydney] is very good - there are many pubs and you can meet beautiful women."

Daniel Ortega (Colombian), Australian Pacific College, Bondi, Sydney

"I have many relatives who live here in Sydney and I heard that living in Sydney was a bit cheaper than living in other countries. [The highlight of my stay in Sydney] has been travelling to Queensland's Gold Coast and Tafe where I met [some] Australian friends and studied. My expectation was that there would be good weather and kind people and that my English skills would improve to a very high level. My experience is that there are lots of Koreans but my English skills are getting better than I thought. [In my free time] I go to somewhere like Hyde Park or the Rocks or go shopping."

Yun-Young Lee (South Korean), Tafe NSW - Sydney Institute, Sydney